that they have destroyed several tonnes of medicines that had expiry-dates but instead these medicines were pushed in the market for its sale in an unauthorised way; and

(b) if so, what deterrent punishment/action Government have taken till date against such pharmaceutical companies who have not only cheated banks but held responsible for playing with lives of thousands of innocent persons by selling outdated medicines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) No such specific information has been received in this Ministr.

(b) Question does not arise in view of (a) above.

Betterment of medical education

1943. DR. K. KASTURIRANGAN : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Medical Council of India, responsible for betterment of medical education, has been challenged for malfunction;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken thereon; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to protect the autonomy and effective discharge of its functions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (c) The information will be collected and laid on the Table of the House.

CGHS for EPFO retired employees

1944. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the employees of EPF Organisation are getting facility of CGHS which are covered under CGHS areas and have been issued CGHS cards, whereas the retired employees of EPF residing in CGHS covered areas are denied benefits of CGHS facilities; and

(b) if so, the details of Government's policy in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) As per the Department of Health's Memorandum dated 1.5.1954 under which the CGHS was constituted, the CGHS facilities are available to such employees/ pensioners who get their salary/pension from the Civil Estimates of the Central Government.

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is an autonomous body and the salary of its employees is not debited/given from the Civil Estimates of the Central Government and as such their employees/retired employees are not automatically eligible for coverage under the CGHS. However, in the past when there was fewer load on the infrastructure of CGHS, the serving employees of EPFO in Delhi were extended CGHS facilities on a cost-to-cost basis.

Due to constraints of infrastructure and manpower, it will not be possible at present for the CGHS to extend its facilities to any new/additional categories of employees including retired employees of EPFO who are otherwise ineligible for obtaining facilities under the CGHS.

Population suffering from various diseases

†1945. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of people suffering common diseases as well as serious diseases are constantly increasing in the country;

(b) if so, Government's assessment in this regard;

(c) what is the percentage of increase in the number of people suffering from both types of the diseases mentioned above during the last five years; and

(d) the number of such people during the years 2000-01 and 2004-05?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.